

Today's News - Friday, December 11, 2009

EDITOR'S NOTE: Early morning travel plans on Monday, so there will be no newsletter - but we'll be back Tuesday, December 15 (and posting from our home base time zone).

- Report from Istanbul: What lessons could its roving band of city experts offer Europe's fastest growing metropolis?
- Sydney to get its first Gehry.
- Farrelly thinks its "great to have a Gehry in Sydney, but hopes he has "another idea, not ichthyological; something with a magic more spatial than material."
- Britain experiments with converting old offices, church halls, and municipal buildings - but not all are convinced it's such a good idea (turning "crap buildings" into schools "isn't going to look very good").
- Will design thresholds improve public buildings? Yes, says Margaret Hodge; no counters Robert Adam.
- Eye-fuls of new and notable performing arts centers.
- Call for entries: Urban Center of Sustainable Transports in Barcelona international student competition.
- NYT's 9th Annual Year in Ideas: Design.
- Weekend diversions:
- Pearman warns "don't let the marketing people put you off": "Earth: art of a changing world" at the Royal Academy "is not a breast-beating show by any means."
- Glancey gives (mostly) thumbs-up to the Serpentine's "Design Real": "Design might not be art - but maybe, in some ways, it's all the better for it."
- Saarinen show at the Museum of the City of New York "offers a fascinating insight into this search for an aesthetic that could, simultaneously, express both egalitarianism and imperialism."
- Dietsch drives through "House of Cars" at the National Building Museum and finds it "fascinating" with "hopeful signs of architectural reinvention."
- Cool time-lapse video of NYC's first robot-built public art installation.
- "Urbanisms: Steven Holl + Li Hu: 4 Projects in China" opens in one of them in Shenzhen.
- Premiere screenings of "Make No Little Plans: Daniel Burnham and the American City" in Chicago (of course).
- Heathcote's list of best books of the year.
- Hodge picks of books for design lovers.
- Mies's Villa Tugendhat as the protagonist in "The Glass Room" might (hopefully) renew interest in the building "help focus attention on its plight and ensure that the efforts made to preserve it."
- We couldn't resist: amazing video of one armchair's 98,268-foot ascent into the stratosphere.

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[Urban Age, Istanbul: What lessons could its roving band of city experts offer Europe's fastest growing metropolis?](#) - Icon (UK)

[Ultimo site gets ultimate architect - Frank Gehry: ...about to unleash his vision for Sydney...University of Technology...Faculty of Business building will be the 80-year-old architect's first in Australia](#) - Sydney Morning Herald

[Sydney need not swallow the getting of Gehry hook, line and sinker: ...is the getting-of-Gehry more an ontological exercise, designed to prove that UTS, like Bilbao, actually exists? Cut to the fish...it would be great to have a Gehry in Sydney, especially rubbing shoulders with a Nouvel and a\(nother\) Foster. But, I'd like him to have another idea, not ichthyological; something with a magic more spatial than material.](#) By Elizabeth Farrelly - Sydney Morning Herald

[Newly converted into classrooms: Could money be saved by turning empty office blocks, and even old Woolworths shops, into schools?...this is a really interesting route for creating learning environments that are exciting"...If we're looking at taking over crap buildings and turning them into schools, it isn't going to look very good."](#) -- Feilden Clegg Bradley - Guardian (UK)

[Will design thresholds improve public buildings? Yes, says Margaret Hodge, it's daft to settle for second best in public programmes; while Robert Adam counters that all they'll do is enforce the establishment view.](#) - BD/Building Design (UK)

[Notable Performing Arts Centers, North America and Global -- REX | OMA; Snohetta; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Saucier + Perrotte; Hodgetts + Fung; SOM; Stephen Dynia; Brian Healy; UNStudio; Chiasmus Partners; NL Architects; Rafael Vinoly; Bernard Tschumi](#) [images] - Archtype Review

[Call for entries: Urban Center of Sustainable Transports in Barcelona international student competition - in collaboration of the Architecture School of Barcelona and Polytechnic University of Catalunya; cash prizes; special registration deadline: January 31, 2010](#) - ArchMedium

[9th Annual Year in Ideas: Bicycle Highways; Cul-de-Sac Ban; Kitchen Sink That Puts Out Fires; Man-Made Greenery: artificial carbon-filtering "trees"; etc.](#) - New York Times Magazine

[How do you solve a problem like the Royal Academy? How about an exhibition inspired by climate change? ..."Earth: art of a changing world"...don't let the marketing people put you off. And don't let the climate-change thing put you off, either...This is not a breast-beating show by any means.](#) By Hugh Pearman [images] - HughPearman.com (UK)

[Design Real: the Serpentine gallery goes back to the drawing board: A sculpted motorcycle jacket, an exquisite metal heart ... a new exhibition argues that good design can be beautiful as well as practical. But is it art?...Design might not be art -- but maybe, in some ways, it's all the better for it.](#) By Jonathan Glancey [images] - Guardian (UK)

[Saarinen: Captain America: New York exhibition reveals Eero Saarinen was nothing less than an architect of the US's ascent as a superpower...exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York offers a fascinating insight into this search for an aesthetic that could, simultaneously, express both egalitarianism and imperialism.](#) - BD/Building Design (UK)

[A drive through garage designs of past and present: "House of Cars" at the National Building Museum proves that the parking garage can be an urban asset, even a beautiful structure to behold...fascinating exhibition...While these designs offer hopeful signs of architectural reinvention, they are still rare in the world of parking garages.](#) By Deborah K. Dietsch - Washington Times

[E-Wall: Checking out New York's first robot-built public art installation...Pike Loop...An otherwise drab corner of the city suddenly seems a bit more colorful and strange. -- Gramazio & Kohler; Storefront for Art and Architecture; Janette Sadik-Khan](#) [images, video] - Metropolis Magazine

[Steven Holl Architects Opens Exhibition in Newly Finished Vanke Offices: "Urbanisms: Steven Holl + Li Hu: 4 Projects in China" in the Horizontal Skyscraper/Vanke Center, in Shenzhen...tracks the process of designing...Nanjing Museum of Art and Architecture, Beijing Linked Hybrid, Shenzhen Horizontal Skyscraper, and Chengdu Sliced Porosity Block.](#) - ArtDaily.org

Premiere of "Make No Little Plans: Daniel Burnham and the American City" Sunday, December 13 at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago. [\[video link\]](#) - Archimedia Workshop

Edwin Heathcote's books of the year: "The Freedoms of Suburbia" by Paul Barker; "On the Town: One Hundred Years of Spectacle in Times Square" by Marshall Berman; "Lost London 1870-1945" by Philip Davies; "Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World" by Joscelyn Godwin; "Tatlin's Tower: Monument to Revolution" by Norbert Lynton; "On Architecture" by Vitruvius - Financial Times (UK)

Seeing Things: Books for Design Lovers: "Toyo Ito"; "Andrée Putman: Complete Works" by Donald Albrecht; "It Is What It Is" by 2x4; "The Bldg Blog Book" by Geoff Manaugh. By Brooke Hodge - New York Times

A new novel set within the looking glass: Villa Tugendhat is in many ways the protagonist in Simon Mawer's "The Glass Room"...renewed interest in the building created by Mawer's novel may help focus attention on its plight and ensure that the efforts made to preserve it... -- Mies Van der Rohe - The Prague Post

Space Chair Project: one armchair's 98,268-foot ascent into the stratosphere. [\[video\]](#) - Toshiba

A Star is Reborn: Fox Oakland Theater and Oakland School for the Arts: A faded movie palace - and the surrounding neighborhood - gets a new lease on life. -- Architectural Dimensions; ELS Architecture and Urban Design; Starkweather Bondy Architecture [\[images\]](#) - ArchNewsNow

Best Architecture Books of 2009: 10 crucial volumes from the classic to the iconoclastic. By Norman Weinstein -- Steven Holl; Le Corbusier; Jerry Yudelson; Álvaro Siza; Vincente Guallart; Calatrava; Bauhaus; etc. - ArchNewsNow



-- Gehry Partners, LLP: Novartis Campus, Basel, Switzerland
-- Construction start: MVRDV: Rotterdam Market Hall, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

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